

# Department of Human Services

## Articles in Today's Clips Thursday, October 19, 2006

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Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
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Published October 19, 2006

## Doctor says Ricky likely was in pain

Boy in shock with head wound, other injuries in final days

By Kevin Grasha  
Lansing State Journal

Seven-year-old Ricky Holland probably lived his final days in pain, with a head injury and a small fracture in his face, a forensic pathologist testified Wednesday.

Based on a review of the boy's father's testimony, Dr. Joyce deJong said Ricky died from complications of a head wound caused by a hammer blow.

"Ricky was probably in shock and gradually declining," said deJong, who for the first time offered specifics on the boy's cause of death.

Three people have testified that Ricky's mother, Lisa Holland, admitted she was the person who struck the boy twice with a metal tack-hammer.

The Williamston woman is charged with murder and child abuse in the July 2005 death of her adopted son.

Her husband, Tim Holland, has pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and spent three days on the stand blaming her for Ricky's death.

Lisa Holland has said her husband killed Ricky.

Defense attorneys are expected to



(Photo by Lansing State Journal file photo)

Memorial: Crosses, toys and flowers are left in June by people at a makeshift memorial for 7-year-old Ricky Holland in rural Ingham County near where his body was found. A pathologist who testified at Lisa Holland's murder trial Wednesday said the boy suffered wounds to his head, face and shoulder.

### What's next

- Lisa Holland's trial continues today before Ingham County Circuit Judge Paula Manderfield. A forensic pathologist is expected to continue testifying. Manderfield told jurors Wednesday that the trial is nearing completion. Opening arguments began Sept. 18. "We should be finished by the end of next week, perhaps earlier," she said.

### TRIAL RECAP

Week 1, Sept. 18-22:

- In opening arguments, prosecutors say the case against Lisa Holland is about manipulation, deception and concealment. Defense attorneys counter the prosecution's key witness, Tim Holland, is not credible and his guilty plea was intended solely to protect himself.

- A Jackson County social worker testifies that in February 2001, Ricky said Lisa Holland tied him up at night. The

question deJong today.

### Bloody scalp wound

Tim Holland has said that in the days before Ricky died, the boy existed in a near-catatonic state, with a bloody scalp wound that never was treated.

Ricky couldn't eat or drink, couldn't support his small body, spoke incoherently and was cold to the touch, Holland testified.

He described seeing Ricky in bed at one point, his legs straight and stiff.

"It's a very ominous sign when that is happening," deJong said Wednesday, adding it could have been evidence the boy's brain was swelling.

As pressure in his cranium increased, his functioning would have declined, affecting his ability to walk, she said.

### Fractured shoulder

Also Wednesday, deJong described fractures to Ricky's shoulder, which she said happened about the time of death.

The shoulder injury, she said, often is seen in abused children. It happens when an arm is violently pulled.

A fracture to the left side of his face, which showed some evidence of healing, would have been painful, with swelling and possible bleeding.

She said it could have been caused by "a blow to the face with a fist, hand or other object."

At a Jan. 28 autopsy, X-rays of the plastic garbage bags containing Ricky's remains showed his body curled up in the fetal position.

Inside the bags, which also contained maggots and beetles, the boy's flesh had been reduced to a "tan, pasty material," deJong said.

"There was no soft tissue - no skin - to speak of," she said.

social worker filed a report with Child Protective Services, but the report was not substantiated.

- Jackson school officials testify the Ricky they knew was not the same boy described and often disparaged by Lisa Holland.

- Testimony also reveals Ricky was removed from elementary school by his parents after it was determined he did not qualify for the special education services.

Week 2, Sept. 25-29:

- Investigators found tiny blood stains in several rooms of Tim and Lisa Holland's Williamston home, a state police forensic scientist testifies.

- A new portrait of Lisa Holland emerges in court: A loving mother who frequently called her family physician with child-rearing questions. But testimony also revealed a doctor last saw Ricky on Sept. 20, 2002.

- Lisa Holland's hairdresser testifies that as hundreds of people searched for Ricky in early July 2005, Holland told her "she just needed to go on with her life."

- A Williamston neighbor who lived across the street from the Hollands describes an incident in May 2005 when he found Ricky in his kitchen. "They don't want me anymore," the neighbor testifies Ricky said.

Week 3, Oct. 2-5

- A former Ingham County Jail inmate testifies Lisa Holland told her Ricky made her angry, so she threw a hammer at the boy's head. She then picked it up and hit Ricky again.

- A nurse at Ricky's Jackson elementary school testifies she reported suspected abuse to Child Protective Services at least twice.

- A second jail inmate testified Lisa Holland confessed to killing Ricky. But Holland's defense attorneys focus on how Tim Holland lied to investigators several times in the case, including in a Jan. 27 statement to police during which he told authorities Lisa killed Ricky by striking him with a hammer.

- A video-recorded interview of Lisa Holland talking with police is played for the jury, during which Lisa speculated her husband might tell police that she hit Ricky and that he then fell into a wall.

- A weekend interview with Tim Holland yielded new information about how Ricky died, prosecutors said. As a result, a forensic pathologist is expected to update the boy's cause of death. The revelation led the judge to postpone the trial a day.

Week 4, Oct. 9-12

- Prosecutors show a 2005 TV interview with Lisa and Tim Holland where the couple begs for the safe return of Ricky, trying to show the couple's statements after the boy was reported missing were nothing but a ruse.

- A forensic scientist testifies a T-shirt stained with Ricky's blood provides clues as to how he was killed. Most the blood - which probably came from a wound on the back or top of Ricky's head - either dripped from his hair or brushed against the shirt like a paintbrush, the scientist says.

- Tim Holland describes the last week of Ricky's life, saying the boy was in a near-catatonic state, not eating or

**Failure-to-thrive**

DeJong also said Ricky was not developing at a normal rate, most likely because he was not receiving adequate nutrition.

She said he likely suffered from failure-to-thrive syndrome, based on a review of medical records through July 9, 2004, Ricky's last documented visit with a medical professional.

"He was not growing appropriately," she said.

In the first two years of his life, Ricky's development was normal, deJong testified.

The Hollands became Ricky's foster parents in fall 2000, when he was 3.

From that point on, she said, his rate of development gradually declined.

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drinking and often incapable of supporting his small body. He says he found Ricky's lifeless body in his bed the night of July 1, 2005. He describes how he hid the body that night in a marshlike area near Dansville.

- A day after Tim Holland described in vivid detail watching his 7-year-old son, Ricky, slowly die during the last week of June 2005, he admitted lying to investigators several times about what happened. He said he gave false statements because he feared losing his family. He said the lying got out of control, and he didn't know how to stop.

This week

- At the conclusion of his testimony, Tim Holland told jurors he should be believed, "Because I am standing here before you now to take responsibility for my role in my son's death." Referring to his wife, he added: "I just hope Lisa will stand up and take responsibility for her actions."

Lansing State Journal Letters

October 19, 2006

## **DeVos, back claim**

During the first debate between Gov. Jennifer Granholm and Dick DeVos, Tim Skubick asked the governor if "she felt personally responsible for the death of Ricky Holland."

How dumb is that question?

In the second debate, Skubick reported a question from DeVos, asking, "Are you better off today than you were four years ago?" Skubick failed to report Granholm's response, which was, "You may not be better off, but certainly Mr. DeVos is."

DeVos claimed Granholm was not telling the truth. If that's true, back up your statements with your own facts and figures.

D.D. Jones

Lansing

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October 19, 2006

**Laura Berman**

## How did gruesome slayings enter governor's debate?



At Channel 7's Broadcast House, the supporters for Dick DeVos picketing outside the gates on Monday night didn't sound like cheerleaders: Their shouts were loud and angry. Some carried signs bearing the picture of Ricky Holland, whose mother stands accused of his death.

What does Ricky Holland have to do with the governor's race?

More and more, it seems. In this campaign season, being an informed voter means handling a barrage of non sequiturs and off-the-wall charges with more-than-customary vigilance.

In debate No. 3 on Monday night, Granholm's opening salvo to her opponent was this: "I would ask and challenge you this evening not to use -- either this evening or in future commercials -- the images of dead children."

### How it got to this

I wouldn't be surprised if most of those watching thought the charge that DeVos was exploiting dead children came out of left field and landed foul.

Delivered out of context and without amplification, Granholm's charge seemed higher-pitched than necessary, unless you were a political junkie or member of the press corps.

To get it, you had to have gotten a particular Republican robo-call or attended the Detroit Economic Club luncheon last week, when DeVos blamed Granholm for the deaths of Ricky Holland and Patrick Selepak's victims.

Most of all, you had to equate those mentions of the Ricky Holland case and other children who died under state watch with "using the names of deceased children" for political gain.

John Truscott, the DeVos team press secretary, described Granholm's charge as "bizarre." He also said the campaign had talked to some family members in cases involved, who didn't object.

He argues that holding Granholm responsible for the deaths of innocent children and the victims of Patrick Selepak is "a management issue."

### Issue or attention ploy?

Well, there is a legitimate management issue involved, which Granholm, and her campaign staff, readily acknowledge.

"She made it clear, 'If you're going to go after me, go after me,' " said Chris DeWitt, Granholm's campaign press secretary. "Don't use these children."

Was Granholm's weird strike on Monday night retaliatory, a comeback to DeVos' charges against her at the Economic Club? Or was it pre-emptive, a way of deterring a last-minute barrage of commercials that use the child-killer theme, subtly or not so?

Truscott says there are no plans for such ads.

But the Granholm camp believed the DeVos campaign was prepared to wring every last drop of pathos -- and incrimination -- out of the story of Ricky Holland and other children who died of neglect or abuse while under the watch of the state.

What the governor was saying at the opening of the last debate was that dead children shouldn't be used as campaign fodder.

One thing's certain: If they are, we're bound to notice.

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October 19, 2006

## How did toddler end up on roadside?

**Norman Sinclair / The Detroit News**

**DETROIT** -- City police investigators and Wayne County prosecutors on Wednesday were unraveling conflicting stories by family members explaining how a 2-year-old toddler ended up on the roadway at Conner and Interstate 94 on Tuesday night.

A 22-year-old male relative of the child was taken into custody Wednesday by Detroit police. Officers from the Child Abuse Unit submitted a request for a warrant late in the day to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

"We are still investigating the case and sorting out the facts," said Assistant Prosecutor Maria Miller. She declined to release names until a warrant is issued.

The case began after 9 p.m. when a female passerby saw someone put a child out of a white, older-model Chevrolet Camaro on Conner and drive off, police said.

The passerby picked the child up and took her to the Detroit police Eastern District station on Gratiot.

Earlier that hour, Roseville police were called to a Chuck E. Cheese restaurant at 31920 Gratiot where a child named Dominique was reported missing. The child had been driven there with others by a male relative, 22.

Roseville Deputy Chief Mike Pachla said the relative told the officers that as the party broke up, the attendees realized the little girl was missing.

"It's our belief that Dominique left that party with someone in a car," Pachla said.

The toddler was returned to her parents late Tuesday night.

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## Mother of molested children pleads guilty in abuse case

By [Daniel Pepper](#)  
Staff Writer

Wednesday, October 18, 2006 10:55 AM EDT

The last defendant charged in one of the worst cases of child sexual abuse police remember in this area pleaded guilty, Friday, Oct. 13, in Allegan County Circuit Court.

Melissa Maria Rupert, 27, of Clyde Township was the last charged in the case. Her husband, James Lee Rupert, 27, was sentenced on charges of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, in September. His father, Ronald, 56, was sentenced to up to 50 years in prison in July. The eight children involved come from two families that lived together in the house.

Rupert pleaded guilty to second-degree child abuse, a four-year felony.

"On one occasion (her daughter) did tell me about James touching her sexually, and I did not listen to her," Rupert said. "In hindsight, I should have listened to her."

She said that was in 2003 when the family lived in Breedsville. The girl is 9 now, Rupert said.

Judge George R. Corsiglia asked her what she meant.

"She told me that James had touched her in her private area," Rupert answered.

She told the court she'd previously worked doing home healthcare and running an in home day care before her arrest.

At his sentencing hearing in September, James Rupert admitted to molesting other children living in the house, but claimed he didn't molest his own children.

Corsiglia accepted the plea.

The case involved, according to prosecutors, tens of thousands of pictures of children being molested and being forced to touch each other sexually.

In a plea agreement in the case, Rupert had four counts of being an accessory after the fact to criminal sexual conduct and three other counts of second-degree child abuse dropped in exchange for her guilty plea.

Prosecutors will also make a non-binding recommendation that Corsiglia sentence Rupert to five years probation and one year in jail.

She will be sentenced Friday, Dec. 1, at 9 a.m.

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## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### Teen describes sexual assaults Milwood educator who was a father figure faces trial on four counts

Thursday, October 19, 2006

By Rex Hall Jr.

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There was a time when he referred to James Lighthizer as his father, a 19-year-old Portage man testified Wednesday in Kalamazoo County District Court.

The two first met when Lighthizer, 53, was the boy's workshop teacher in seventh grade at Milwood Magnet School, the Portage man said. By the time he was 14, the two were taking in hockey games together, playing golf and seeing each other daily, often at Lighthizer's Portage residence.

"He was my dad," the Portage man said.

But a year later, in the fall of 2002, when the boy was 15, he told Kalamazoo County Assistant Prosecutor Michael Robie, the relationship between him and Lighthizer, now an assistant principal at Milwood, began to change.

He said the two often wrestled playfully, but during one of their matches, Lighthizer touched him inappropriately and, a few weeks later, Lighthizer held him down and sexually assaulted him while the two were at Lighthizer's residence.

By the time he was 16, the man testified Wednesday, the incidents of inappropriate touching and sexual assault amounted to almost 20.

After hearing the man's testimony Wednesday, District Judge Robert Kropf bound Lighthizer over for trial.

on four counts of first-degree criminal sexual conduct and, in the alternative, four counts of second-degree criminal sexual conduct. If convicted of first-degree criminal sexual conduct, Lighthizer could face up to life in prison.

In binding Lighthizer over for trial, Kropf noted the age of the man at the time of the assaults, that Lighthizer was in a position of authority as an assistant school principal, and that Lighthizer allegedly used physical coercion "to have control of the victim to engage in these acts."

Lighthizer remains on administrative leave from Milwood Magnet School.

After the hearing, Lighthizer's attorney, Edwin Hettinger, said the teen's testimony was fabricated.

"My client adamantly asserts his innocence," Hettinger said. "I will be investigating."

The 19-year-old testified Wednesday that his close relationship with Lighthizer continued up until this year and he never told anyone of the alleged assaults until August, when he told first a girlfriend and then his mother. He said Lighthizer never told him not to tell anyone and would often apologize after the alleged incidents.

"He was like my dad," the man testified. "I saw him as my father. It was hard to jeopardize that."

October 19, 2006

## **State suspends day care license**

Allegations of ignored abuse led to the license suspension of a Plymouth day care facility Monday.

Officials from the Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) issued an order of summary suspension and a notice of intent to revoke the license of Childtime Child Care, which operates Childtime Children's Center in Plymouth.

The allegations came in light of the alleged murder of 2-year-old Allison Newman by her foster mother, Carol Poole. A former employee at Childtime, where Newman attended for the last nine months, said that Newman showed signs of abuse. The female employee claims she notified management at the center, but that the claims were not investigated properly.

The center is taking legal steps to reopen and called the closure "unnecessary."

"We conducted an internal investigation with many of the teachers who cared for Allison," said center spokesperson Amy Popp. She said that investigation "didn't substantiate" the employee's claims.

Maureen Sorbet, a spokesperson for the DHS, did not elaborate on the allegations, citing the continuing investigation.

Popp stressed that no abuse occurred at the center and said that Newman's death was a tragedy.

The foster mother, Poole, was charged with felony murder and child abuse on Oct. 2 and faces life in prison if convicted. According to Canton Police, Poole called 911 at approximately 2 a.m. on Sept. 22 to report that Newman was unconscious and not breathing. The child died later that day in the hospital. The Washtenaw County Medical Examiner's office ruled the cause of death to be severe head trauma.

Police say Poole told them several versions of the events that led to the injuries. She said that Newman was a very active child and had hurt herself while playing, but the circumstances of the accident changed significantly, said Deputy Police Chief Alex Wilson.

The Plymouth facility notified parents that it could no longer provide childcare late Monday evening.

"Our other centers in the metro Detroit area are equipped to accommodate them as a result," said Popp. The other locations are not affected by the suspension.

Teachers at the day care will continue to work at other facilities while the Plymouth facility is shut down.

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Article published Oct 19, 2006

## State shuts doors on care center involved in child's death

BY BRAD KADRICH  
STAFF WRITER

While a Canton foster mother faces a felony murder trial in the death of her 2-year-old foster daughter, the child care center where the girl spent much of her time has now been closed amid allegations center officials did not report signs of physical abuse.

State officials Monday ordered Childtime Learning Center in Plymouth to close its doors, suspending its license and announcing an intent to seek revocation as a result of "a recent investigation of a complaint regarding the day care center."

The complaint, made by former Childtime teacher Cher Majeske, involved the center's failure to report what Majeske said were signs of abuse on 2-year-old Allison Newman. Majeske claims she told her supervisor, who did not report the abuse to the state.

Allison Newman died Sept. 22 at Michigan Mott Children's Hospital. The Wayne County medical examiner ruled the cause of death as head trauma. Allison's foster mother, Carol Poole, has been charged with felony murder, child abuse and involuntary manslaughter in the case.

State Department of Human Services spokeswoman Maureen Sorbet wouldn't comment further on the state's action, citing the ongoing nature of the case.

"There are a number of reasons for such an action," she said of the center's closing. "Generally, it's done to protect the children being cared for at the child care center."

State records show the center has had other problems. An employee was disciplined following a January complaint the staff member picked up a 3-year-old girl by the arm, causing an injury. The center was also investigated for having too many children being cared for by too few employees. Records show corrective action was taken by facility management.

Childtime officials said they conducted an internal investigation into Majeske's claims, but found no evidence to substantiate them. In a statement released by Childtime, officials said they are cooperating with the state.

"Childtime is committed to providing a safe environment and quality care to all of the children we serve," officials said. "The children are our top priority so we are taking the necessary steps to reopen our Plymouth location so that we can continue providing the high level of care that our families are accustomed to."

Sorbet said the center could appeal. If an appeal is made, it would be heard by an administrative law judge, who would make one of three recommendations to the director of Human Services: continuance of the license suspension; revocation of the license; or overturning the original decision to suspend.

"The director of the department would decide what to do," Sorbet said. "If (Childtime) still wishes to appeal, they could take it to circuit court."

Childtime officials called the closure "unnecessary" and said it "has caused undue stress to the families we provide care for."

"It is important for children to have the reassurance of familiar surroundings, playmates and caring staff, especially at a time when they may still be coping with the loss of their friend Allison," officials said in their statement.

"We hope to have this matter resolved quickly so we can reopen in a timely manner and continue to provide our children with the quality of care that our families have come to expect from Childtime."

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# DESIREE COOPER: Judge says violent kids need second chances

**BY DESIREE COOPER**

FREE PRESS COLUMNIST

*October 19, 2006*

Balancing a victim's rage against a child's promise is what Eugene Arthur Moore does every day.

As an Oakland County Probate Court judge since 1966, he's witnessed the horror that violent teens can wreak upon victims' families. And he's also seen how troubled kids can turn their lives around.

He hopes one of them will be Nathaniel Abraham who, at 11, fatally wounded another teenager in 1997. Abraham was tried under a draconian Michigan law that made it possible for a child of any age to be tried and sentenced as an adult for murder.

"There was definitely a feeling back then that kids were becoming too dangerous and we needed to lock them up and throw away the key," said Moore on Tuesday after speaking at a juvenile justice symposium convened by the Skillman Center for Children.

But the long-feared generation of superpredators has not materialized. In 1994, 1,968 Wayne County youth were arrested for violent crimes, including murder and forcible rape, compared to 413 arrests in 2004, according to the FBI. The numbers followed a national downward trend.

## Hope is put to the test

Refusing to bow to pressure, Moore didn't throw away the key in the Abraham case. Instead of sentencing the boy as an adult, he sentenced him as a juvenile, ensuring his release in January, when he turns 21 -- whether he's rehabilitated or not.

Signs are promising. In preparation for his release, Abraham's been gradually stepped down from maximum security at the W.J. Maxey Training School near Whitmore Lake to a halfway house in Bay City. On Monday, he appears before the judge for one of his last progress reports.

## Gambling on a payoff

It now costs about \$150,000 annually to house a boy at Maxey, compared to \$50,000 a year to send him to Harvard University. A purely punitive mentality, said Moore, has become too expensive.

"The pendulum is beginning to swing back," he said Tuesday. "There's now an understanding that working for the successful rehabilitation of criminals is not only cheaper, but it's the way to give society the best protection."

It can't be easy to hold that view when a young criminal has destroyed your life, but Moore has. His nephew, a Texas college student, was carjacked a few years ago. The perpetrator put Moore's nephew

and a passenger in the trunk of the car, then drove it into a lake, drowning the two young men.

"Things like that shake your faith," said Moore, whose family did not seek the death penalty. "But it's amazing to me that outside of very serious cases, most victims don't talk about revenge, but about urging me to do what will make us safe.

"When Nate is released, the issue will not be whether or not I was right, but whether or not the juvenile system is working," said Moore. "If he's successful, maybe we can learn what we did right -- for the sake of the other kids who are in the system."

And for our sake, too.

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## Boy, 14, charged in stabbing of 15-year-old

Thursday, October 19, 2006

By Scott Hagen

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Jackson County prosecutors issued three charges Wednesday against a teen accused of stabbing another boy near a bus stop and threatening to stab the victim's sister.

A petition -- the juvenile equivalent of an arrest warrant -- was issued for the 14-year-old from Blackman Township. He faces two counts of felonious assault and one count of assault with intent to do great bodily harm. He is being held at the Jackson County Youth Home.

The teen was walking to the bus stop Wednesday morning at the Walnut Grove manufactured-home community when he started fighting with a 15-year-old boy, police said.

At some point, the younger teen produced a hunting knife with a 3 1/2-inch blade. He slashed at the boy's legs and stabbed him once, police said.

During the scuffle the knife flew from the teen's hand. The victim's younger sister, standing nearby and watching the fight, picked up the knife.

The younger boy then produced another knife from his pocket and threatened the sister, police said. The suspect fled to his home while the bus driver called police.

Police said there had been another fight between the two boys earlier in the week. Both attend Northwest High School.

The victim was taken to Foote Hospital for treatment and released.

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## Girl, 11, gets probation in Roseville school bus beating

**ASSOCIATED PRESS**

*October 19, 2006*

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich. (AP) -- An 11-year-old girl who pleaded guilty to assault and battery for beating another girl on a suburban Detroit school bus has been sentenced to six months' probation.

The girl, who authorities said had been bullying the 11-year-old victim because she had good grades, pleaded guilty Aug. 10 in Macomb County Circuit Court. She was charged as a juvenile and could have received up to 93 days in custody.

At Wednesday's hearing, Judge Tracey Yokich also ordered that the girl have no contact with the victim and obey a 9 p.m. curfew.

The girls attended Roseville's Alumni Memorial Elementary School. On June 8, as their bus was about to drop them off, the suspect jumped from her seat and began to strike the victim with both fists, Prosecutor Eric Smith has said.

The incident was caught by the school bus surveillance camera. Names of those involved were not released.

A May 12 attack on another school bus in Macomb County attracted national attention when the 10-year-old victim, Anchor Bay Middle School North student Chester Gala and his father appeared on NBC's "Today" show.

The two teens accused in that case face trial in November, The Detroit News said.

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Information from: The Detroit News, <http://www.detnews.com>

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## Woman gets 7-15 years in slaying

**FLINT**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Thursday, October 19, 2006

**By Paul Janczewski**

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FLINT - A Flint woman who stabbed her boyfriend to death in June, ending a relationship immersed in drugs, alcohol and abuse, was sentenced to 7-15 years in prison.

"You've been irresponsible half of your life, and look at where it's gotten you," Genesee Circuit Judge Geoffrey L. Neithercut told Felicia K. Thornton at the hearing.

Thornton, 47, earlier pleaded no contest to voluntary manslaughter in the stabbing death June 3 of Anthony Holmes.

Holmes, 42, and Thornton got into an early morning fight at the Evergreen Regency apartments off Lippincott Boulevard.

Deborah Holmes, the victim's sister, told Neithercut the couple had a history of drug and alcohol use and violence.

"She killed him ... because he had her dope," Deborah Holmes said.

But she told Thornton she forgives her.

"I hope this causes you to make a change in your life," she told Thornton with tears streaming down her face.

Attorney David S. Grant Jr., who represented Thornton, said the slaying came about through a deadly combination of alcohol, drug abuse and domestic violence between the couple. He said Thornton had been hospitalized in the past from injuries received from Holmes.

Deborah Holmes said her brother had also been injured by Thornton in the past.

Thornton apologized, but said neither police nor Holmes' family was able to help her with his abuse.

Thornton was also ordered to pay \$2,848 to the family for funeral expenses.

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## Woman shoots estranged husband

Thursday, October 19, 2006

ALLEGAN COUNTY -- A Hopkins man was shot by his estranged wife Wednesday night after police say he barged into the home where she was living and assaulted her boyfriend. Hopkins Village Officer Brad Simonds said the husband made threats before entering a West Main Street house about 6 p.m. Simonds said the woman shot her husband in the leg and that the injury is not life-threatening. Simonds did not release the names of those involved in the incident, pending review by prosecutors. The boyfriend suffered a minor injury in the alleged assault by the husband, Simonds said. Police do not believe the husband had a weapon, but believe the shooting was in self-defense.

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## Child support payments go electronic

Thursday, October 19, 2006

### THE SAGINAW NEWS

Thanks to a new state law aimed at saving money, parents who receive child support will start getting their money electronically.

Beginning this month, the Friend of the Court and the state Department of Human Services Office of Child Support will disburse support payments electronically by direct deposit into a personal checking or savings account or to a debit card unless recipients meet hardship exception criteria, officials said.

More than 30 percent of custodial parents have received their payments through direct deposit, officials said.

Parents may use the Visa debit cards -- at no cost to the customer -- at thousands of banks or credit unions that accept the transaction device.

Customers also may get cash back with purchases from more than 29,000 Interlink merchants in Michigan without incurring fees, authorities said. v

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## Changes in child support system

Posted: Wednesday, October 18, 2006 at 10:10 AM

The Department of Human Services announced that child support payments in Saginaw and Gratiot Counties will begin being distributed electronically. Several other mid Michigan Counties, including Bay and Genesee have already switched to the electronic system. DHS sent notices to people in the system. Anyone with questions should call their caseworker or the their local [Department of Human Services office](#). The change is in an effort to allow families quicker access to their money and to eliminate stolen or lost checks. The Department of Human Services will make exceptions for certain individuals, including those with mental or physical disabilities and those who may have a language barrier.

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## RCMP investigates custody battle

**Lori Coolican**

The StarPhoenix

*Thursday, October 19, 2006*

A national children's rights group has involved the RCMP in an increasingly bitter custody battle between a Saskatoon father and a Prince Albert couple, who were given custody of his infant son by his former girlfriend within days of birth.

On Monday, the Canadian Children's Rights Council contacted Darrell McFadyen, assistant commissioner of the RCMP for Saskatchewan, to request he order an investigation into how the baby ended up in the Prince Albert couple's custody, states a press release issued by the group.

Rick Fredrickson, whose status as the boy's father was proven by a DNA test in July and recognized by a family court judge last month, said he was glad to receive a phone call on Thursday from an RCMP officer with questions about the situation.

"Prayers are being answered," he said through tears. "Thank God the RCMP are coming so that I can know what happened here."

Fredrickson has never seen his only child, who was born in late April and left a Saskatoon hospital bearing a name chosen by the Prince Albert couple, including their surname.

Fredrickson and his fiancée, Barb Hesketh-Jones, approached a variety of government departments in the weeks prior to the birth, asserting Fredrickson's paternity and asking for custody, after a relative of the baby's mother told him the mother had made plans to hand the child over to someone else. The infant left the hospital before they were informed of the birth.

Sgt. Brad Kaeding, RCMP spokesperson for the province, confirmed members of the force's general investigations section in Saskatoon have been ordered to collect more information from Fredrickson.

Once that has been done, "a decision will be made as to whether or not the investigation needs to be furthered, or whether or not it is in fact RCMP jurisdiction, as he is from Saskatoon and the incidents which he has referred to are taking place in Prince Albert," Kaeding said.

n CONT'D: Please see Baby/A2

"It could be that either or both of those jurisdictions have responsibility for the investigation."

Meanwhile, two weeks have passed since a family court judge granted Fredrickson and Hesketh-Jones weekly one-hour visits with the baby under supervision at a facility in Prince Albert, while the custody issue is awaiting trial.

No visits have taken place. According to recent correspondence from the Prince Albert couple's lawyer, the supervising facility will not allow Hesketh-Jones to be with Fredrickson when he visits the baby because its own internal rules state "parents, not other people."

The facility, a crisis centre called Children's Haven, will not allow any visits until both sides have agreed on a contract setting out the terms, the couple's lawyer wrote.

The terms they propose include that Fredrickson not refer to himself as "daddy or any other name derivative of this title," not take any photographs or describe the visits to the media and not call the baby by any name other than the one they've chosen, in order to avoid "confusing" him.

"We would like to be present at the visits in order to facilitate the best experience for our son," the couple wrote in a draft set of rules delivered to Fredrickson's lawyer. Such an arrangement is against the rules at Children's Haven, but "due to the age of our child and the circumstances . . . this situation is somewhat unique," they added.

Mark Vanstone, the lawyer representing Fredrickson and Hesketh-Jones, said unless they can come to an agreement quickly, the location of the supervised visits may have to be changed by the court because of an unusual amount of resistance from Children's Haven in making the arrangements.

An affidavit sworn by the Prince Albert woman who has custody of the baby states that she "was, or is, a board member for Children's Haven and has been a financial donor in the past," Vanstone said in an interview.

"That's all well and good, but I think that may be part of why we're experiencing this level of difficulty."

Rick Fredrickson's custody battle will be the subject of a closed-door pre-trial hearing Nov. 13.

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CLOSE WINDOW

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## Kids get their pick of apples to benefit the needy

Thursday, October 19, 2006

By Morgan Jarema

The Grand Rapids Press

CONKLIN -- Apple juice? Yep.

Apple pie? Of course.

Applesauce? mmm-hmm.

"I love everything apple," said 9-year-old Madison Machiorlatti.

A penchant for the fruit made the North Park Elementary fifth-grader especially excited about Wednesday's lesson: picking apples.

Madison was one of about 50 North Park Elementary fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders who spent Wednesday morning picking apples at Ridgeview Orchards.

The nearly 5,000 pounds of apples they picked, placed gently into milk crates and carried through muddy terrain were loaded into a truck and taken to Second Harvest Gleaners Food Bank.

"They're for people who don't have money for food," explained fifth-grader Adam Gentry, 10.

Farmer Al Dietrich gave the youngsters the run of two rows of the red delicious variety. The apples would have gone unpicked, he said, because tighter U.S.-Mexico border restrictions this year have meant fewer migrant workers to pick them.

Gail Philbin, Gleaners' donor relations manager, said the Comstock Park nonprofit, which distributed 19 million pounds of packaged and fresh food last year to 200 West Michigan agencies, works with dozens of local farmers.

"We're trying to emphasize fresh food as much as possible," Philbin said. "You can't get much fresher than picking right off the tree."

Gleaners has about 100 volunteers who pick fruit and vegetables every year, she said. Most are college and church groups. North Park Elementary is the only school group.

This was the third year North Park students picked apples for Gleaners.

Later in the school year they will visit the Gleaners' warehouse and help sort and pack food for needy families.

"We're trying to teach our kids to be giving members of society," fifth-grade teacher Dave Huyser said.

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# **September Jobless Rate Holds Steady At 7.1 Percent**

MIRS, Wednesday, September 19, 2006

The number of Michigan residents looking for work last month remained unchanged from August unemployment figures, according to a report issued today by the Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG).

The report showed that the adjusted unemployment rate in September was unchanged from August — hovering at 7.1 percent.

The report indicates that while total employment increased by 22,000, the number of unemployed edged up by 4,000. As a result, the state's labor force expanded by 26,000 over the month, the report concluded.

“Taken as a whole, the state's service sector recorded job gains during 2006,” said Rick **WACLAWEK**, director of DLEG's Bureau of Labor Market Information and Strategic Initiatives. “The overall job decline in Michigan in 2006 can be traced to cutbacks in manufacturing.”

For the month of September, the U.S. national jobless rate edged down by one-tenth of one percentage point to 4.6 percent. For the year, the DLEG report shows the state's employment has dropped by 17,000 positions.

According to the survey of employers (the survey used to measure expansion or contraction in the economy) the number of seasonally adjusted payroll jobs edged up a slight 2,000 in September to a total of 4,363,000. Gains were seen in the leisure and hospitality services, which climbed by 6,000 jobs and in education and health services, which climbed by 4,000 jobs. However, government employment was down by 6,000 jobs and trade, transportation and utilities were down by 2,000. All other economic sectors remained little changed from August.

From one year ago, the employer survey shows the state has lost 33,000 jobs, or seven-tenths of one percent. During that period, essentially all of the job declines occurred in three major sectors, manufacturing (-38,000), retail trade (-15,000) jobs and government, (-11,000) jobs.

“Jennifer [\*\*GRANHOLM\*\*](#) has said repeatedly and rather excitedly that she is thrilled with the performance of her economic plan,” said Michigan Republican Party Chair Saul **ANUZIS**, in response to the new numbers. “This is the same plan that she ran on in 2002, and the same plan that she campaigns on today. But, I think the numbers speak for themselves. Worst unemployment, most lost jobs over the last three years ... all this happened on Granholm's watch, she gave it a good try but it hasn't worked. Michigan needs a change.”

## Oceana's Herald-Journal

Posted: 10-18-2006

### Oceana artist donates paintings to local DHS

By Mark Lewis

Herald-Journal Writer

When she started painting scenes of farm workers six years ago, Annette Toulemon had no idea those pictures would be the beginning of a series of works that would come to represent the migrant worker experience in Oceana County.

And she certainly didn't have any idea paintings from that collection would hang in one of Hart's busiest government buildings.



Both are now a reality, the latter coming Oct. 12, when Toulemon donated two paintings, depicting migrant workers harvesting asparagus and pickles, to Oceana County Department of Human Services board member Deb Reed. They will be hung in the DHS lobby on Polk Road in Hart.

A native of Southern California, Toulemon, who now lives with her family in rural Hart, started her 'Gratitude Series' of paintings after visiting several area farms. Taking photos while on those tours spurred her to tackle, through painting, some of those images. Her deep appreciation for the hard working migrants soon became her dominate inspiration. She didn't think of the first few paintings as something that could be grouped together, but after finishing three or four she started to see the migrant theme emerge. The 'Gratitude Series,' 11 Oceana farm scenes, was completed after six years of work.

Toulemon is quick to point out that while she took photos of the farm scenes, the actual paintings are not just mere reproductions.

"We did take a lot of pictures," said Toulemon, at last Thursday's dedication ceremony. "But pictures are really ideas for feelings."

The 'Gratitude Series' was featured in 2005 at a Hart Public Library month-long exhibition, while Toulemon's other works can be seen in the maternity ward at Hackley Hospital and an Episcopal Church, in Muskegon. Patrons of La Fiesta restaurant in Hart might have noticed Toulemon's murals on the walls. She has also done artwork for the Oceana Center Grange.

Describing herself as a "housewife, a woman, and I paint," Toulemon was trained as an art teacher, but never received any formal art instruction. She jokingly refers to her style as 'Oceana Primitive,' but rejects styles and techniques in favor of context and feel.

"There is no such thing as a 'way' to paint," Toulemon said.

Toulemon said she will continue with the Oceana farm theme, but says she has added landscapes to her repertoire. She said she would like to add other crops like pumpkins and celery to her paintings.

At last Thursday's donation, dozens of people, DHS clients and employees alike, as well as Director of the Office of Migrant Affairs for the State of Michigan Martha Gonzalez-Cortes, sang Toulemon's praises, and enjoyed a cake with small versions of the donated paintings impressed upon the top.

"This (donation) is an overwhelming thing," said Nancy Sterk, Oceana DHS director. "When I heard about it a couple of weeks ago, I knew what pictures she meant. They are that powerful."

## Voice Your Opinion

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Date published: 10-18-2006

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Posted: 10-18-2006

Letters to the editor

Oceana's Herald-Journal

## **Writer says Dennis is right for West Michigan**

Dear Editor:

I am appalled by the mass Republican flyer sent out regarding Julie Dennis and its portrayal of her position on a specific bill regarding Welfare recipients. If you talked to Julie you would know that it is exactly because there are young children involved in providing welfare benefits that Julie voted against that piece of faulty legislation. She voted against that specific bill because of what was missing. It provided for an immediate loss of welfare benefits without any provision made for the children or treatment/rehabilitation for the mother. The flyer's statement of "Wrong Plan " for West Michigan was right, but because she cares about children caught in difficult, desperate life circumstances, Julie Dennis IS right for West Michigan.

I urge everyone to consider the fact that when someone attempts to characterize the voting history of any legislator, it is important to know what is in all parts of the bill if you are to understand the meaning of the vote. Distortion and misrepresentation by the Republican leadership in Lansing. That's wrong!

KATHRYN SPITLER

365 N Wythe St., Pentwater



## DeVos will help poor get poorer

FLINT JOURNAL LETTER TO THE EDITOR

**GRAND BLANC TOWNSHIP**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Thursday, October 19, 2006

**JOURNAL READER**

This is in response to Jeff R. Symons letter "Dems exploit the poor" [Your Views, Oct. 6, Page A12.] I was shocked at his insensitivity to the working poor. Millions of Americans are willing to work hard, but because minimum wage is so low they are struggling just to survive. With one sick child or injury, they could be jobless.

What alarms me more than a "phony" concern for the poor is no concern at all. If the minimum wage today was worth what it was in 1968, it would be about \$8.50 an hour. Minimum wage now is 30 percent less than it was then. A full-time, year-round minimum wage worker earns just \$10,712 a year, which means that minimum wage workers cannot afford health care, pushing more to turn to welfare and other services. Who do you think pays for that? We do!

Dick DeVos knows a lot about job cuts, having cut jobs as the head of Amway. If DeVos is in charge, he will support right-to-work laws that protect corporations. Vote for DeVos and the rich will get richer while the poor will get poorer.

Eva L. Morgan

Grand Blanc

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